

iLIGHT

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Children in God's View

Each child is created by God. He or she is unique and valuable (Psalm 8:2-5, 139:13-16).

Children are a gift from God. From the beginning God values every human being. Everybody – even a small child – is a thought of God and is loved and intended by him.

A longing for God is placed in every child (Romans 1:19).

Each child is created after God's image and born with a connection to God. Therefore he or she can perceive God. Knowledge of God is already possible at an early stage of life, which can be called "faith" in the broadest sense. Every human being – and thus every child – is capable of a basic trust in the Creator, independent of his or her emotional, spiritual or cognitive development and external influences. Children, although, have very different ideas about God. Their faith is initially influenced and shaped by their environment, for example their family or church. The environment not only moulds the relationship with God, but also the concrete ideas of God and His nature. These ideas are not rigid, but change in the course of a child's development. We want to promote the faith of the children, teenagers and young people who are entrusted to us in family and church and accompany them on their way with God and in their faith.

Regarding children Jesus says: "Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them." (Mark 10:13-16) He also awards them participation in the kingdom of God and blesses them (Matthew 19:14).

Jesus' encounters with children were extraordinary for that time. When Jesus meets

children, He makes it clear that they are not excluded from the kingdom of God. They can come to Him and be near Him. At this moment for Him there is nothing of greater importance than to bless the children.

Children are important to Jesus. He involves them in His actions (John 6:9), wants them to be with Him and lets them celebrate Him as Messiah (Matthew 21:12-17).

Jesus serves children by healing them, speaking with them and blessing them. A little boy with five loaves of bread and two fish becomes part of the miracle of bread multiplication; and as the theologians in the Temple in Jerusalem distance themselves from Jesus, children recognize Jesus as the Messiah and thus fulfill an Old Testament prophecy. These events show that Jesus considers children as being equal.

To adults Jesus presents children as role models. "Anyone who will not receive God's kingdom like a little child will never enter it." (Mark 10:15) This means that adults can learn from and be challenged by the faith of a child.

As a church we need children. And not so to be younger and more colourful, but to learn from them. Without children, we would lack something decisive. Because children accept the kingdom of God differently than grown-ups do. For them, God's kingdom means: to come, to open oneself, to ask, being able to accept, to let oneself be presented with gifts, to trust. The exemplary thing about the faith of a child is that children do not come up with the idea that one must or can earn the closeness and love of God. They hear about Jesus, what he has to give and want to have it – and to have it all.

God's Bible Promises for kids

Love—if you give it away
it comes right back to you.
*"We should love each other,
because love comes from God."*

1 John 4:7

Don't worry about tomorrow,
God's already there.
*"Don't worry about tomorrow. Each day
has enough trouble of its own.
Tomorrow will have its own worries."*

Matthew 6:34

from: Daly, R., "God's Little Book of Bible Promises for Children". Autumn House, Grantham, Great Britain, 2000

CARING FOR KIDS

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What do children truly need to grow up happy? To feel that they fit in and matter? To believe that they are loved? They need you—you and other caring adults to genuinely be there for them as they're growing up. They need to know you care, not just on special occasions, but every day.

How do you do that? By accepting, guiding, and loving them in simple, yet meaningful ways.

You don't need a lot of time and money; you don't have to be a parent, teacher, or coach. Sincerely showing children you care can make a difference, helping to bring out the best in them—and in you.

Unwind together.

Be happy.

Ask them to help you.

Support them.

Applaud their successes.

Deal with problems and conflicts while they're still small.

Chaperone a dance.

Tell them stories in which they are the hero.

Believe in them.

Nurture them with good food.

Be flexible.

Delight in their uniqueness.

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Jesus is looking for every single child. Everyone can be found by him. He is the Redeemer, also for children.

The understanding of sin as a state of separation from God should be seen in the context of the individual development of the child. For a child, "sin" is first and foremost something very specific, namely a single act. Children up to an age of about ten to twelve years understand sin as doing something evil to a fellow human being and thus violating a law or general norms. If this is to be put right again, there must be debate and reparation with people or/and God (through prayer). Only from puberty on children can understand that sin means a condition in conjunction with God, namely that sin puts a distance in the relationship with God. Only from puberty on they can understand that Jesus has restored the relationship by His death on the cross. ("Jesus died for you.") When we deal with biblical stories, of course we do not exclude the subject of sin and forgiveness. But the experience of the acting God is paramount, because in this way the children's image of God can expand (God is gracious, God is holy, etc.). How a child reacts to that will vary according to his or her development. A child may like to say: "Jesus is my friend", or when he or she is older: "Jesus is my Lord. I follow Jesus." Children also experience the personal encounter with God through prayer, nature and other people.

At every stage of life, a child can respond to God's offer of friendship in a way that corresponds to his or her individual development. In this respect, we perceive children as fully adequate believers and part of the church.

People working in the church should be

challenged to listen carefully how children talk about God and their faith, and to appreciate when children speak about it. It is important not to evaluate ideas that differ from one's own. By working with biblical texts and stories, the child's image of God can be confirmed, questioned, corrected and supplemented. When the child starts school, the image of God and God's relationship are not fixed yet. If children receive sufficient incentives during this time, their faith can develop further. In the course of time, children will repeatedly respond to God's invitation and put this into words in very different ways. What was expressed intuitively at the beginning of primary school will be articulated more and more deliberately in the course of time. This development takes place very individually.

The members of a local church have a common responsibility to accompany the children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

During the time of the Old Testament and Judaism children belonged to the covenant people. They were involved in the rites and traditions of Israel. It was not only the parents who were commissioned by God to be role models and mediators of the faith, but the entire people of Israel. Today, too, everyone in the church – and above all those involved in the work with children – have a special commission. To fulfill this commission in the best possible way, the members of the local churches are encouraged and supported to take advantage of internal and external training opportunities. ♦

Jochen Härdter

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JESUS

wants all of me



Illuminated

Very few things can completely fill up an environment the way light can. When Jesus told the people that they were the light of the world, that message was also for you. This means that others can see how Jesus makes you a better person, turning you into someone attentive, obedient, happy,

and illuminated.

With all the light of Jesus shining on you, other people can also be illuminated. Ask God to help you brighten someone's day today with your smile, your hug, your words, and your actions. And don't miss the opportunity to do so whenever it comes.

"You are the light of the world."

Matthew 5:14

From: Ferreira de Oliveira, S.: *Talking with God*. Editorial Safeliz, Madrid, Spain, 2015



This present must have cost a lot; it's coming all the way from China!

From: www.enfandises.com/en/bibliotheque/cat-23-geography/phrase-22041.html

IN SYNERGY

Children skipping school to teach adults a lesson

When haters go after your looks and differences, it means they have nowhere left to go. And then you know you're winning! I have Asperger's syndrome and that means I'm sometimes a bit different from the norm. And - given the right circumstances - being different is a superpower. I'm not public about my diagnosis to "hide" behind it, but because I know many ignorant people still see it as an "illness", or something negative. And believe me, my diagnosis has limited me before. Before I started school striking I had no energy, no friends and I didn't speak to anyone. I just sat alone at home, with an eating disorder. All of that is gone now, since I have found meaning, in a world that sometimes seems meaningless to so many people." (Greta Thunberg, 1st September 2019, Instagram).

For more than one year, Greta has been skipping school classes every Friday morning and protesting for climate justice in front of the Parliament. As she said – she is not alone anymore. Millions are joining her, demanding a change:

"Wake up! Climate emergency!"

"Don't burn our future!"

"No one is too small to make a difference!"

"The Teenager on a strike for the planet!"

It is time that we, adults who are

calling ourselves Christ-followers, ask ourselves some hard questions:

1. Why must children stay out of school to teach us, adults, a lesson about stewardship and misuse of God-given resources on the Planet Earth?
2. Why are we, adults, using excuses and even conspiracy theories to hide from responsibilities of being good stewards?
3. If Greta would come to meet Jesus, would we, disciples of Jesus, stop her and tell her that Master is too occupied to talk to her and to give her a blessing?

What can we do to bring our children and teens back to classrooms, where they belong?

1. Learn, read, and talk about climate change and climate justice.
2. Learn, read, and talk about what it means to be environmentally friendly.
3. Change habits in your home, school, workplace, the church: recycle with purpose, use public transport, share a car, learn to do more with less, save energy, take short showers, volunteer for tree planting programs, ...
4. Pray for our planet, because those who suffer the most from the challenges posed by climate change have contributed the least to the problem in the first place: the poor and vulnerable, especially in developing

countries. To make matters worse, these are the same people who have benefited the least from modernization and industrialization and have a relatively small carbon footprint. This is a double injustice.

Join a school strike with your children!



Photo: Patrija Virti

Maja Ahac
ADRA Europe
Advocacy Coordinator



Multisensory Worship

Not only children but also adults learn better (remember better and understand better) what they can perceive through more senses at the same time. This is even more true for children with special needs than for others. For example, children with severe sensory defects usually receive effective compensation through a combination of several other senses: the lack of sight must be replaced by hearing, touch, smell and taste. For the deaf individuals, the absence of auditory perception is replaced mainly by visual stimuli, but also physically (by touch and movement). Children with autism spectrum disorders work very well with structured learning, which uses simple graphics (pictures, pictograms), brief verbal instructions and structured arrangement of space, time and activities (specific physical experience and specific perception of time).

If we want to make our worships (or other church activities) accessible to children and other participants with special needs, it is necessary to use a multisensory approach. After all, God has usually presented Himself and some important truths to His people in this way. For example, the sanctuary was full of symbols perceived by all human senses (one could see, hear, smell and touch many symbols of God's glory and Messiah's sacrifice). The engagement of all the senses can be also found in the

stories of many prophets and patriarchs (remember the story about Abraham's calling for the sacrifice of his son Isaac).

So, how can we open our worship better for the senses of our children (not just those with special needs) today? At first, let's take care that they can see our joy of God. Sometimes our dark black or grey suits and an austere dignified liturgy may not be very attractive to the sight of children, and not expressing the true praise of the Lord. Children usually like more colours. Likewise, listening to a 60-minute sermon is unbearable for most little children – not just those with ADHD (perhaps except for some children with high-function autism). Children should also hear worship music and songs in a form close to their mentality and emotions, which may be different from the typical choral songs so often sounding in our congregations.

Physical (tangible) worship experience for children can come through their direct active participation - for example, by their own performance with a children song, a short biblical scene or in any other way where they physically become a part of the worship community. Don't forget the olfactory perception, too. We do not use incense in our congregations, but a mixture of the strong fragrances of some members' perfumes may not be the ideal odor in the house of prayer. Sometimes it is



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better (especially for some children) to open the window and let in the fresh air or even the smell of the surrounding nature - the creation of God.

And how to give children a "taste" of God's closeness? While adults have this experience at least once a quarter at the Lord's Supper, children are deprived of it. However, it may be a good idea to prepare an unusual and tasty goodness for them on Sabbath, which may not be only sweet, but also healthy.

I have no doubt that if you think about it, you will have many other interesting ideas on how to enrich the multisensory worship for your children at home and in your congregations, so that all children can truly enjoy it - even in spite of some disadvantages.

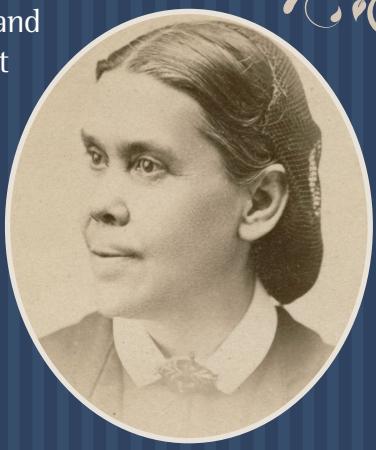
Josef Slowik, PhD

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Department of Pedagogy



Every child brought into the world is the property of Jesus Christ, and should be educated by precept and example to love and obey God; but by far the largest number of parents have neglected their God-given work, by failing to educate and train their children, from the first dawning of reason, to know and love Christ. By painstaking effort parents are to watch the opening, receptive mind and make everything in the home life secondary to the positive duty enjoined upon them by God—to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Adventist Home, p. 183



You're getting very s-l-e-e-p-y



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Incred-Biblical

"I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety."

Psalm 4:8

Sean read the same paragraph twice and still didn't know what it said. He yawned, trying to force himself to concentrate as he looked down at the page through blurry eyes.

Finally, he slammed the book shut. "What's wrong with me? Am I just stupid?" Sean shook his head and went to the refrigerator for an apple. At this rate, he'd never be ready for the social studies test he faced tomorrow. He felt stressed just thinking about explaining a low test score to his parents.

What Sean doesn't know is that he's actually smart. He just isn't getting enough

sleep. According to studies, teenagers need more sleep than both younger kids and adults, but they often get less. Here are some interesting facts.

- Sleep loss interferes with the way teens learn. Teens that get enough sleep also get better grades.
- While you sleep your immune system goes to work to help prevent colds and other sicknesses, and even clear up pimples.
- If you don't get enough sleep, you're most likely to be overweight, because the hormones that tell your body when you've had enough to eat don't work properly when you're sleep-deprived.

Some ways to help yourself sleep better include not drinking caffeine, not watching TV or playing video games just before bed, keeping your room clean and free of distractions, and making sure your room is totally dark while you rest.

Info Splat

According to scientists, dolphins sleep about eight hours a day—but with only half of their brain at a time! This is because they have to be conscious to breathe. If they went into a full sleep, they would suffocate.

React now!

Are YOU getting enough sleep? For a week, try adding one more hour of nighttime sleep and see if you notice a difference in the way you feel.

From: Bockmann, M. et al.: *Elasti-Brain. 365 Devotions to Stretch your Mind and Shape your Faith*. Review and Herald Publishing Ass., Hagerstown, MD, USA, 2008

SECRETS FROM THE TREASURE CHEST



Why do some people think having an attitude is cool?

- Kendra, 13

I know what you mean, Kendra. These people walk around like they're better than everyone else, or they shout put-downs and give certain gestures with their hands. We see it a lot on music videos.

People develop "attitudes" usually as a cover for their insecurities. They don't know how to be natural, so they become unnatural. Those who are afraid of the dark will go around saying, "Nothing scares me, man. I'm brave and heroic." What they're doing is trying to convince themselves of that fact. This even works sometimes!

We all should develop an attitude. Every one of us must decide who we are and how we're going to let life

affect us. The best place to look for an example to follow isn't MTV or Hollywood. It's in the footsteps of the One who had the greatest attitude of all, Jesus Christ. *"For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you,"* He says in John 13:15.

What does Jesus do to us? He loves us unconditionally, on our bad days, sad days, fearful days, and sinful days. He forgives us when we do stupid, mindless things. He never leaves us, even when we try to push Him away.

When a person has this type of attitude, his or her gestures, words, and even the way he or she walks will reveal it for all to see. No longer will this person be saying "Look at me. Pay

attention to me." Instead, the message will be, "May I show you Jesus?"



From: Mills, C.: *Secrets from the Treasure Chest. Questions Kids ask about Life*. Review and Herald Publishing Ass., Hagerstown, MD, USA, 1996

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Tragic Personal Loss

Supporting Children and Families Struck by Tragedy

The Basics

A tragic personal loss such as a natural disaster, car accident, or fire is a scary, sudden, and sometimes even violent experience for a child. The trauma a child experiences during these events can leave long-lasting emotional wounds. Supporting children and their families after a traumatic event can lessen the dramatic impact the event might otherwise have on their lives. In order to help, it's important to know what emotions the child will go through. There are several stages of emotions to consider.

- **First: shock and confusion.** Shortly after a traumatic event, a child's mind will not be able to work as it usually does. The child may appear stunned and respond to things you say without much thought. You'll see physical symptoms of stress such as shaking hands or sweating, but the child will probably have little emotional response at this stage.
- **Second: emotional response.** After the initial shock has passed, a child will start to feel the emotional effects of the event. You may see:
 - Increased anxiety—sensitivity, asking a lot of questions, talking about things he or she is afraid of, worrying the tragedy will happen again, fear of sleeping, nightmares.
 - Clinginess—fear of separation from parents or caregivers, asking where his or her parents are, difficulty going to school or church.
 - Anger and resentment—lashing out at loved ones, expressing anger at the tragic event.
 - Regression—reverting back to younger behaviors such as whining, crying, clinging, or bed-wetting.
- **Third: returning to normal life.** After a few weeks, the child will begin to adjust back to his or her routine. The sooner the schedule can be re-established, the quicker the recovery. At this phase, the child may start to go through a grieving period for what he or she has lost, but will be better able to manage emotions at this point.

Care Tips

- **Go to the child.** Children need a lot of support and reassurance after a traumatic event. Knowing that there are people who are willing to help will comfort kids and help them feel safe. It's important to go to the child instead of offering to take care of the child somewhere else. Immediately following a tragedy, children feel safest when they are close to their parents or trusted caregivers, in familiar surroundings if possible.
- **Comfort the parents.** Most of the child's emotional support is going to come from the parents. Children whose parents deal well with a major stressor will recover more quickly and feel more secure. Help parents formulate a way to talk about the event calmly and matter-of-factly. Offer enough information to help the child understand what happened, but don't dwell on the subject or offer details that might frighten the child further.
- **Offer basic needs.** If a family has lost their home or many of their belongings, they are going to need special assistance. Work quickly with church members, other churches, and local agencies to accommodate the basic needs of the family.
- **Listen.** Let the child tell his or her story. Talking about what happened helps children organize their feelings and process emotions. Don't judge or give advice—just listen. Because each child's timetable for recovery is different, follow the child's lead. Encourage the child to share pieces of the story as he or she is ready.
- **Pray.** Praying with the child will demonstrate not only that you care, but that God cares, too. It's possible that the child might feel too overwhelmed, or even too angry, to pray. But knowing that someone is interceding for him or her at a spiritual level will touch the child at some point in the healing process.

What not to say

- **"You should be grateful. There are chil-**

dren who have it worse than you."

This might be true. However, it sends the message to the child that he or she never has the right to complain or feel loss. If a child buys into this line of thinking, he or she will learn to repress instead of express feelings.

- **"This can't happen again."** We'd like to believe that the disaster or traumatic loss is an isolated event in a child's life. Avoid making false reassurances that may not be true. Instead redirect kids to see God as their forever friend who will never leave them and who will be there during every trial.
- **"Be brave."** It's natural for a child to have fears after a tragic personal loss. Telling the child to be brave can give the impression that those fears are not OK to have.

What to say

- **"I'm right here."** Reassure the child that you want to help and intend to do so for the long haul. Your physical presence after a personal tragedy will be just as important as your words. Let the child know that you are there to help with whatever he or she needs.
- **"I'm so upset about what happened to your house, but I'm so glad everyone is safe."** Acknowledge the traumatic event and don't minimize it, but also try to offer some positive thoughts.
- **"It's no one's fault."** Children may not fully understand why an event happened, and as a result, they may feel guilty that they did something wrong. Reassure the child that tornadoes, hurricanes, or other natural disasters, as well as accidents and illnesses, are forces that the child had nothing to do with and couldn't have prevented.
- **"Do you need extra time with me?"** After a traumatic event, sometimes a child just needs to spend time with a trusted adult. The child might not need to discuss anything. But just playing a board game with a loved adult can replenish a child's sense of security and well-being.





Redeeming the time (7)—“Talk about them... when you lie down”

For those who have just come across this bulletin, since January we have been dealing with the basics of family education, mainly of quality time spent with children, according to Deuteronomy 6:6-9. After successively and responsibly addressing mother and father's specific roles, this time we focus on a precise moment of the day, when the parents should accomplish their educative duties – the “lie down time” or when you pack the children off to bed.

Do you have a family program at the end of the day? How do you close the day? Is there a specific moment when you, mother, or you, father or both of you call together the members of your family for worship? Are the mother, the father or both of them in charge of this spiritual responsibility?

No, I am not going to speak about learning restful goodnight & evening prayers, lullabies and peaceful thoughts to end the day or prayers for bedtime, but about making the most of every occasion to discourse with your kids about divine things. Every opportunity should be taken to instill the

knowledge of divine things into their tender minds.

“The Christian’s first duty is in the home. Fathers and mothers, yours is a great responsibility. You are preparing your children for life or for death... Teach them that religion is a living principle...” Signs of the Times, November 9, 1891.

For most of our families, bedtime is a war field. Children do not want to go to bed, request of their parents to stay longer, call upon the examples of their fellow mates, appeal to the unfairness of this schedule, ask for few minutes more, for another drink, a cookie, a story etc. Psychologically speaking, setting up and preserving a bedtime ritual is worth the effort.

Bedtime worship is an excellent opportunity to construct and foster your relationship with your children. It's about that state near absence of agitation that encourages conversation, about those moments of receiving reciprocal exclusive attention, building the sense of personal value, when the most sensitive question can be shared, and the spiritual lesson can be taught.

According to the specialists, repetition and structured program help children feel secure from risk. Repetitive worship is comforting (wonder why they ask for the same story over and over again). Bedtime worship helps children to love the Word. Reading aloud to your children help you stay connected with them in a positive way¹.

Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy, wrote about a friend who, nearing death, explained his perpetual faith. The man said that from his childhood he had prayed his own act of private devotion and worship before going to sleep. One day, after a hunting trip with his brother, they were getting ready for bed in the same room, and he knelt down to pray. His brother looked at him and said, “You still doing that?” You see, the routine still works, but it is important for both parents to have an understanding of what is supposed to take place during bedtime worship, adding a significant portion of emotional and spiritual strength to the family.

¹<https://psychcentral.com/lib/the-value-of-a-childs-bedtime-routine/>

CREATIVE WORSHIP IDEAS FOR BUSY FAMILIES

“Comfort Menu”

Bible Connection

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4).

Things you need:

- Paper
- Ballpoint pens
- Strong facial tissues

Worship activities

1. Read the Bible verses and talk about God as our Comforter. How does God comfort us? What Bible verses do you find most comforting? Jesus came “to bind up the brokenhearted.” What does that mean and how did Jesus comfort people? How has God comforted you in the past?
 2. List at least 12 different ways in
- which the people in your family like to be comforted: a hug, having someone to listen to them, a mug of hot chocolate, going for a walk, a back rub, doing something fun together, etc.
3. Write out your list neatly, or print it using your computer. The list you have made together is your family's special “Comfort Menu.”
 4. Whenever anyone feels sad, ill, or upset, encourage them to either choose something from the menu of comforting options or add a new idea to the list.
 5. When do you think each person in your family most needs to be comforted? How can you make sure that you're comforting them in the best way possible?
 6. When we comfort each other, we show each other God's loving comfort. When we don't know how to comfort each other, God can show us how.



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Prayer

Pray for the people you know who need some comfort. Write their names on a facial tissue using a ballpoint pen. Ask God to comfort them, and ask Him to show you how you can be their comforters too.

Now do something practical to comfort the people you have prayed for—make a card, plan a visit, give them a call, hug them, etc.

Experiment #6: The Fleeing Pepper

This simple experiment illustrates the power of prayer, a mighty resource that puts us in direct contact with God. When we face temptation, honest prayer asking for God's help to resist can work as a protection shield that will make Satan flee.

Materials: White plate, ground black pepper (it works better if it is well ground into very fine powder), water, dish-washing soap.

Time: 2 minutes

Safety warning: This experiment is safe to perform, even with small children. Just be careful with the black pepper so they do not eat it, or touch their eyes after touching the spice.

Values: The power of prayer to help us resist temptation.

Procedure:

1. Pour water into the plate, covering the bottom completely. Tell the audience: *This plate represents the mind of a Christian. We want to keep our minds pure and clean but often there are bad things that come to our minds, that threaten to stain our thoughts and can end up turning into bad actions. This is what we call temptation. For instance,*
2. Sprinkle some pepper dust onto the water surface while talking: *sometimes we are tempted to say a small lie to get out of trouble, to say something mean to a person that offended us, to gossip about a friend... When these bad ideas start flying around in our heads and we try to get rid of them by our own means, it does not work very well. Dip your finger into the water with pepper, and move it a little as if you were trying to remove the pepper (do not move it much, just to illustrate the idea). Show your finger to the audience, it will have some pepper attached to it.*
3. Keep explaining: *But God has given us a powerful tool against temptation that is called prayer. In Matthew 6:13, Jesus taught his disciples to pray for not being led into temptation and Psalm 34:7 says that "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him delivers them." What happens when we pray for God's help?*
4. Put a drop of dish-washing liquid soap on your finger tip and then dip it into the water. The pepper will move away from your finger, creating a dark ring in the outer edges of the dish. Tell the audience: *If we honestly ask for help, God has the power to remove those bad ideas and thoughts that tempt us into sin.*

The Science

Behind the Experiment: Water has a high surface tension, meaning that the water molecules attract each other and tend to stick together forming a sort of film on the surface. The ground pepper dust does not dissolve in water but rests on this film. By adding soap to the water, we break the surface tension and the water molecules spread out flat, moving away from the soap and carrying the pepper with them.



Noemi Duran
Geoscience Research Institute
Director of the European
Branch Office





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TURBOCHARGE your Children's Ministry

Wisdom

Have you ever heard the phrase "Pick your battles"? Do you think that's wise? And how do you know when to keep fighting and when to let an issue go?

Have you ever been to a point when one minute, you're sure of the vision and inspiration you received from God, and then suddenly you find yourself having to defend that vision to others? What do you do? Here are some valuable truths:

Believe and ask. Matthew 21:22 says simply that if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. God answers when we ask. His Word promises it.

Prepare. Then prepare some more. Be well-prepared before it's time

to share your vision with others. Leaders are looking for conviction. If you don't prepare, your scattered thoughts are likely to misrepresent your passion and your vision.

Submit to authority. Always submit to your God-given authorities. There is no allowance for rebellion in scripture. God never honors it. God clearly places those in authority over us, and his policies regarding how we are to respect them, respond to them, and pray for them are also clear. Hold up your end in a conflict, but respect their input as leaders.

Answer for yourself: Did God speak? If he did, then why worry? Believe in what God told you. When

you know God has spoken, hold tight and don't compromise in what he's instructed you to do. Also, understand that there are many ways to end up where you need to be. Sometimes you may have to creatively navigate through an issue to end up where you're going. Trust in the Lord to ultimately provide the way to fulfill his will.

Accept risks. Many times, other leaders are looking for resolve in you, a passion for what you bring to the table. This goes hand in hand with both preparation and submission to authority. That's where your confidence, your resolve, and your willingness to accept risk come from.

From: Hudson, D. & Werner, S.: *100 Best Ideas to Turbocharge your Children's Ministry*. Group Publishing, Loveland, Colorado, USA, 2013

WAYS TO PARENT HAPPY CHILDREN

Managing conflicts peacefully - finding creative solutions (2)

When you're angry and upset it's hard to think clearly. The very first thing to do is to help people calm down to prevent the argument from getting out of control. When everyone has calmed down, invite each person involved in the disagreement to talk about how the problem or conflict affects them. You can't solve a problem until you know what it really is, and what everyone involved is thinking, feeling and hoping. Here are simple ways to help everyone understand the problem better:

Write it down

Writing down your feelings and ideas, instead of talking about them, can help you express yourself without getting into an argument. Try this with an older child. Fold a sheet

of paper into quarters. Draw a circle in the middle of the page and write a short sentence inside it, describing your shared problem. Label each quarter with one of the following headings:

- When I think about this problem I feel...
- My biggest fear, worry or concern about this problem is...
- I need you to understand...
- Some good things I hope will come out of talking together are...

Give each person a sheet of paper, divided into these sections, on which to write their thoughts and ideas. Then swap your pages with each other, so you can read what everyone else has written. Write some questions on each other's pages if you'd like to know more about what they've said, or if you



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need some clarification, and give them time to write their answers.

This is a simple, 'low-conflict' way to help you understand how the problem affects each of you in different ways, so you can find a better solution together.

From: Holford K.: *52 Ways to Parent Happy Children*. Autumn House Publications, Grantham, Lincolnshire, UK, 2016

ACTIVITY REPORT

People 7.0 Summit in Italy

People 7.0: Forwarding together

Adventists in search of a joint venture to guide children, women, and families

Encourage, uplift, develop. All together, following the footsteps of Jesus as modern disciples. This was the main message and the invitation launched in Lignano Sabbiadoro (Italy), from the People 7.0 stage. The summit was organized by the Inter-European Region (EUD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, from the 18th to 22nd of September 2019.

About 500 women, men, children, sisters and brothers, coming from all the countries represented by the Inter-European Region, and some representatives from Australia, Asia, Africa, and America, took part in the meeting inspired by the guiding motto: "People 7.0: Forward together".

The keyword of the event, at its first edition, was indeed "synergy". The Children's, Women's, and Family Ministries in the EUD jointly organized the meeting, sharing ideas, experiences, and common dreams.

"At the center, we, the people, are all interconnected in our daily challenges and needs: children are part of the family and represent their future; families are also composed of women and women are connected in various ways with families and children," were the remarks from the three Ministries' directors: Dagmar Dorn (Women's Ministries), Elsa Cozzi (Children's Ministries), and Rainer Wanitschek (Family Ministries), organizers of the event.

Starting the work of the summit, Mario Brito, EUD president, pointed out the novelty of the inter-ministerial joint venture, inviting everyone "to become disciples of Jesus in our interpersonal relationships, in a daily setting".

Many international guests walked the stage of People 7.0 to present their reflections and personal experiences on over twenty themes: from new ways of creative communication to the resources that could be cultivated to live a full and satisfied life.

The module the organizers proposed was the world-famous TED Talk style, translated to E.U.D. Talk, where E. stands for Encourage, U. for uplift, and D. for develop. With a maximum talk time of 15 minutes, the speakers shared their topics and later animated a panel guided by two moderators.

"We were impressed by the way we received the messages," declared participants, "so clear, authentic, open, void of any kind of politically correct language, and straight to the point. This is what we were really expecting, and it has been [fulfilling]."

During the afternoon, summit participants were able to choose from a wide range of workshops. Among the topics: Why kids (really) misbehave; The healthy way to forgive in a family; A creative approach to the inclusion of people with special needs; The path to financial peace, and much more.

João Martins, ADRA Europe director, invited everyone to sign the petition *Every child. Everywhere. In school*, on the website <https://inschool.adra.org/#sign-petition> (See also page 15). "The dream is to [send] all the children [of] the planet to school, saving them from exploitation, poverty and early marriages," Martins declared.

Special focus was also placed on the global EndItNow campaign (www.enditnow.org). The Adventist Church continues to advocate the rights of all women, as well as children and men, of this earth to be free from any kind of violence and abuse.

The internationally renowned mime, Carlos Martinez, who has always been committed to defending human and civil rights, performed on the stage of People 7.0, giving a "brush stroke" of poetry and smiles to all summit attendees.

On Friday evening, a significant anniversary was celebrated: the centenary of the Adventist Family Ministries. Willie and Elaine Oliver, Adventist Family Ministries world leaders, celebrated the event by presenting the stories and experiences that marked this long century. The Sabbath worship was the highlight of the whole summit. The three organizers set up the morning program in a very creative and special module that caught the attention of all participants.

"We would like to present something out of the box, and let the participants feel ownership of the message," declared the three. And so it was, because everyone could find, in the very clear and symbolic words of the message presented by the three, something that concerned them, that pushed them to reflect, something with which to identify.

On Sabbath afternoon, a special time was also dedicated to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Children's Ministries department and to give a special recognition to Linda Koh, Children's Ministries world leader, for her strong and long commitment to the children and the Ministry. She was greeted by several world CHM regions directors and CHM leaders.

The Summit ended by feeding the hope of having marked the path of shared and common work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Veronica Addazio, Hope Media Italy
Elsa Cozzi, EUD Children's Ministries Director

Following some feedbacks from CHM world leaders that participated to the Summit:

A great event with excellent EUD (TED) Talks and workshops, and the many heart-warming testimonies shared by people who have experienced God in their lives. It was also a wonderful opportunity to meet children's leaders from around EUD and to network with them. The environment among nature was so conducive to personal time

with God. I especially appreciate meeting up with seven division directors from around the world church. Great job and congratulations to your team for daring to think outside of the box! (Linda Koh, GC)

As a Women's and Childrens and Adolescents director from another Division I counted a privilege to be able to attend such an inspiring and well-thought and "out-of-the-box" program. Understanding how to reach this generation for God requires willingness to let go of our own personal perceptions and accept in love new ideas from God, just as he did when he came to this world as a child/man. Thank you for your efforts to teach how to reach and allow people to think. (Dinorah, IAD)

Elsa, thank you for the great opportunity to receive excellent training! I could have listened to each presenter for another hour, they were that good! Loved the General sessions and how each department collaborated together with the same message but in different styles.... definitely kept my attention! (Sherri, NAD)

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to your team for the hospitality and genuine love and care that was shown to us as your guests at the conference. The accommodation and location was top class, your team of volunteers were wonderful. (...) This care for people was genuinely appreciated by us as first time visitors to your Division event. The resources which you had on offer for your territories were great. Loved the EUD (TED style) talks different and engaging and some of the testimonies were absolutely incredible. Thank you for a people centered, Christ focused conference. It was very clear that you three Directors: Children, Family & Women's Ministries Director have a very close working relationship. Congratulations on a successful upskilling and inspiring convention. (Litiana, SPD)



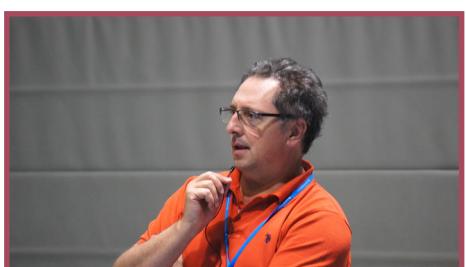
Photos: C. Cozzi



ACTIVITY REPORT



People 7.0 Summit in Italy



Photos: C. Cozzi

Encourage, Uplift, Develop

Now it's over, the congress, or really the Inter-Ministries summit of three departments of the Seventh-Day Adventist church in the Inter-European Division in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy.

What a good idea to get all the people involved in Family Ministries, Children's Ministries and Women's Ministries together to address topics involved with people and calling the congress People 7.0.

Living as Christians reflecting God's love to all people is a journey that we are all on and where we can use all the help we can get from professionals in various areas. That is what this summit was about. The EUD team picked up the letters of the division's abbreviation to make up an acronym: E -

encourage; U – uplift; D – develop.

Each day of the congress addressed one of these areas with short "EUD"-talks brilliantly presented by interesting speakers with professional experience in their respective fields. In the afternoon there was a plethora of workshops to choose from. The evening programs told the real stories of real authentic people.

The congress structure may have been surprising for some, but the organizers should be commended for their courage in taking up new and inspiring ways to pass on the message of living an authentic life, reaching out to our communities and letting out little light shine. Let us take off our masks and be the people we are and let God heal our hurts. Maybe then we can reach others

who are scared away by the perfect image that we project when we come to church with our Sabbath masks on our faces.

The journey that was started here will not end here. The participants were encouraged to take up the challenge of passing on the inspiration to their homes and local churches and to call an accountability partner in a few days in order to remind them of what, how and when they will do this.

It was a privilege to attend this congress and I want to thank the whole Division team for this wonderful experience. But most of all the success of the congress was due to God's presence and blessing in the whole event. Thanks be to God!

Hannele Ottschofski



ACTIVITY REPORT



Camporee in Portugal

Give them the possibility to decide

On July 29, after months of hard work and preparation, we started our 13th EUD Pathfinder Camporee, in Sesimbra Natura Park. Sesimbra Natura Park is located south of Lisbon, about 30 minutes far from Lisbon International Airport, and has more than 800 hectares of land. On that beautifully maintained location, we built the village that held around 2.700 participants (Pathfinders, Staff, and Volunteers).

Under the theme "God's Promise, Always with You", from July 29 until August 4, all the Pathfinders had the possibility to have fun with hundreds of activities organized, prepared, and built on site, exclusively for them. The Portuguese team worked endless hours during months to prepare this Camporee. I must say that I'm proud of having had the opportunity to work with such a team.

It was a long trip for most of the Unions that attended the Camporee. We walked a lot, we slept on the ground, the bathrooms were not the ones from our houses... but the Pathfinders had an experience they will never forget. Because a Camporee is that... an experience. But what kind of experience?

From the organizational point of view, we wanted to give the Pathfinders the opportunity to have an experience that would transform their lives and their way of understanding Christian life.

The concept of the Camporee activities (called Expeditions) were a series of Workshops that each Pathfinder could choose to participate in, by him- or herself, or with a group of people from different countries. In those Expedition areas, after participating in a workshop, the Pathfinders would receive resources (called talents). Depending on the length and type of workshop, they would get a different amount of talents. We gave them the possibility of choosing what to do with the talents that they earned during the Camporee.

Two options were given:

- Spend the resources to buy attractive activities provided during each day (a moment called City Life).
- Donate the resources to ADRA to help children in Sao Tome to have an education and hope in the future.

The response from the Pathfinders has been overwhelming. The amount received exceeded our expectations.



The Pathfinders preferred to give their resources to help other better than use them to have fun... a big lesson we should learn from. Our teenagers are ready to serve in the mission... we just need to give them the possibility to decide.

The devotionals, based on the life of Joshua, were delivered by Pastor Stephan Sigg, former EUD Division Youth Director. He was an inspiration for the Pathfinders, deep and practical, with great illustrations to remember better the deep lessons from the Bible.

I would like to highlight one moment from this Camporee: on Friday evening we had the best moment of every Camporee... The Baptisms!!! 13 Pathfinders were baptized, and for me there is no better moment in a Camporee... watching how teenagers, publicly, showed their love for Jesus, making a lifelong commitment with Him... my heart was overwhelmed.

There is no perfect Camporee, we can always improve something for the next one, but I want to give thanks to God for the amazing possibility He has given me and my team, Isaac Chia and Alexandra Mora, to do all we could for this Camporee. It has been an extremely good and inspirational experience.

Let me share with you a thought from Ellen G. White, that encompasses what we wanted to achieve during this Camporee, we wanted to engrave in the Pathfinders' minds and hearts the beauty of being part of the Mission.

"Educate the youth to help the youth; and in seeking to do this work each will gain experience that will qualify him to be

a consecrated worker in a larger sphere." -
Messages to Young People, p. 203.

Jonatan Tejel Subirada
Inter-European Division
Youth Ministries

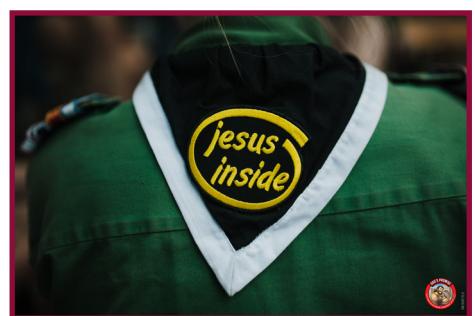


Photo: ÂM BARTOLO



Photo: ÂM BARTOLO



Photo: ÂM BARTOLO

ACTIVITY REPORT

Camporee in Portugal



Photo: ÂM BÁRTOLO



Photo: ÂM BÁRTOLO



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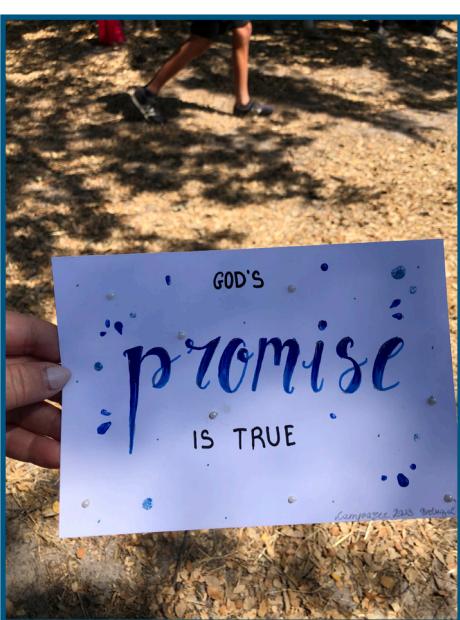


Photo: ÂM BÁRTOLO





ACTIVITY REPORT



News of the North and South German Unions

iCOR Worship Service

This year, the Children's and Youth Departments of Germany set themselves the task of designing and carrying out 3 iCOR project worship services in one of our churches. But what is iCOR, and what is such kind of worship service?

First of all iCOR stands for: intergenerational church of refuge! iCOR is an instrument of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for a value-oriented church development. iCOR aims to aid churches in their efforts to come to know their values and to live these values together in the everyday life of the congregation, across generations, because in this way they strengthen their vitality and become relevant for society. iCOR is a navigation aid that wants to accompany congregations in being spiritual homes.

One iCOR-service has already been held, the second one is prepared. These worship services should then be a help for many churches who want to conduct similar worship services.

But what are iCOR services? First of all they are church services which quite simply claim to be cross-generational, i.e. to be interesting for everyone in church.

Karen Holford's book, "Altogether Wonderful", from which also the theses below were compiled, served us as a preparatory help.

A cross-generational worship service is

- a service that involves, appeals to and inspires everyone in the church.
- a service that uses verbal, visual and sensomotoric experiences of worship.
- a service where everyone can learn from everyone.
- a service during which Bible stories can be experienced with as many senses as possible. This liveliness anchors them in people's lives.
- a service in which most aspects of worship can be understood and enjoyed by both children and adults.
- a service that makes it possible to follow the example of Jesus, for whom the spiritual needs of the children were particularly important.
- a service with the intention of enabling everyone to experience Jesus Christ.
- a service in which everyone can experience for themselves the love of God, but also the love of others in the church.
- a service in which we grow and support one another on our way.

- an opportunity for each person to show love, care and respect to others in their church.

A cross-generational worship service is not

- a family service in which children are present but mostly uninvolved.
- a service in which children are only involved during the 7-minute children's story.
- a service in which children are only invited to do things in an adult way.
- a service planned for children only.
- a service designed for verbal activities only.
- a service that focuses on the intellectual and religious needs of adults.



The title of the worship service was "Peter walks on the water!" (Matthew 14)

The stage design had previously been painted on canvas and then been installed in the church and set up with the boat (see picture) as decoration and stage during the week before the service.

After the visitors of the service on the specific Sabbath (approx. 180 - 200 attendants) had been divided into groups by prepared lots, everyone looked for his appropriate group in the room. So children, teenagers, parents, elderly and old people were well mixed. No one sat in the place where they usually sit.

The musical worship with songs that were known to all generations and that appealed to them was of course not to be omitted.

Afterwards, a narrative sermon took center stage. For this the pastor acted as the apostle Peter and wore a corresponding costume.

The story consisted of 3 parts and was interrupted by an interaction in the groups, in which all were equally involved.

For example, everyone folded and labeled a boat, the groups talked about everybody's fears and securities, and had a quiet time. All members of the group were always involved in the task, where-



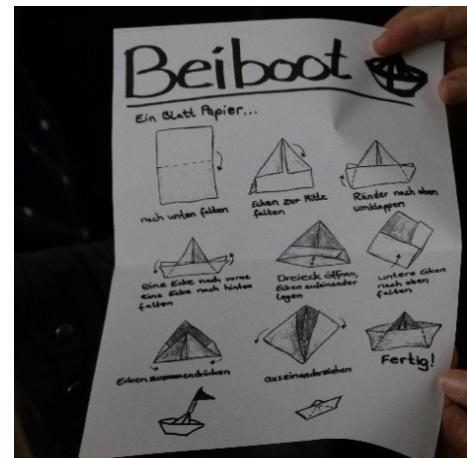
by smaller children were accompanied by one parent.

After the worship service everyone was invited to a communal meal.

Such worship services enrich young and old alike. Of course it will hardly be possible to have such a service every week because it does involve a lot of preparation, but it would be good if all churches would work towards this kind of service (see theses above). We need to offer attractive worship services in order to pass on God's word in a contemporary manner. This is not just a question for Germany. In every country of our division this challenge is given.

Gudrun Gattmann

(Should a church have questions about this worship service or the theses, we will be happy to discuss them with you or send you an e-mail.)





ACTIVITY REPORT



News of the North and South German Unions

Esteem and respect for children

Impulses for local churches

Every person – and hence every child – is loved by God and therefore invaluable. As adults and responsible persons in our church we stand up for the children and treat them with esteem and respect.

Children are warmly welcome

Children are church, they together with their families belong there. It is not so much a matter of doing something for them, but of working together with them. What do the families, who come to us or whom we would like to invite, need? How would we like to meet them? Jesus served children by healing them, speaking with them, and blessing them. We, too, want to see the children with the eyes of God and serve them. As a church we therefore warmly welcome children with their families.

Accompanying faith—core values for working with children

The Youth Department Germany together with the Religionspädagogische Institut (RPI) [Institute for Religious Pedagogics] has compiled thought-provoking incentives, biblical impulses and concrete

ideas for action, which will support you in your manifold work with children. The title of this brochure is Accompanying Faith. The core values for working with children are based on the conviction that God has put great potential in every human being, regardless of age, culture, gender, and church affiliation.

With this brochure you will receive practical recommendations how to look for ways and means to consciously perceive every single child and to foster him or her. We encourage you to learn from each other, to grow together and to continue to accompany the children in their faith. The thoughts and impulses contained in this brochure will help you in your work on site, and it will help that we, as churches, become more and more the spiritual home that God has in mind for his children and our society.

Practicing day: praying for children

The brochure can, of course, be read and worked through at home on one's own. However, a practicing day with your teams is much more effective. If you think about how you can best bring the core values to bear and plan a practicing day for this pur-

pose – here is a thought from our practicing day impulses, that can already be realized today:

"Children are close to God's heart."

Take your time to pray together for the children of your church."

We thank you for your commitment and we wish you as volunteers and full-time staff God's blessing in your work with children.

The brochure in German, Glauben begleiten [Accompanying Faith], can be ordered free of charge under article number 3310 Heft "Glauben begleiten" from Zentrallager der Freikirche in Deutschland: www.adventisten.de/zentrallager, phone +49 711 44819-19.



Keep in Mind

EVENTS FROM THE INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

2019

October 3-6

Deaf Interpreters Training
Milano, Italy

November 15-17

CHM Training Course
Sofia, Bulgaria

HELP US GET TO 1 MILLION SIGNATURES



Passing it on: Generational Discipleship in church

There are examples of generational discipleship all through Scripture. The most oft-quoted verse about generational discipleship is probably Deuteronomy 6:4-9 where we are told to impress the commands of the Lord upon our children and to talk about them [...] basically, all of the time. And this command is given within the full assembly of Israel to all the people so not just to parents but to the larger faith community.

So how does generational discipleship play out in a faith community? In 2017, The Journal of Intergenerational Relationships published an article whose findings explained that intergenerational relationships create essential learning environments for all generations. In other words, if generations are going to interact with each other in meaningful ways, there are some key essentials that need to be in place.

Specifically they find that three things are necessary for intergenerational learning

1. There must be space to learn about one's own generation with other generations
2. All generations must act as learners and teachers at the same time
3. The learning must motivate participants towards a particular way.

Often when our churches gather, these dynamics are either not in place at all or are difficult to find. Putting multiple generations into a place where they can interact in meaningful ways can be challenging because of differences

in likes, dislikes, development and experience.

As a result, many churches opt for an environment that segregates the generations from one another and promotes learning within one age range rather than between the generations. It's much more difficult to create an intentional space for both to give and receive.

While these things are challenging, they are not impossible to overcome. It might be easier in the short term to maintain age-specific environments, but it is clear that in the long run, generational discipleship will be hampered by the lack of meaningful intergenerational relationships and interactions.

So what can we do? There's no silver bullet that will magically erase these challenges or suddenly make it easier to engage generations in learning and living together, but there are some avenues to explore that will create the space for growth.

1. Stated Purpose – If you desire to put generations together for anything from corporate worship to shared meals, be sure and let everyone know the purpose behind your action. Give a stated reason for creating a multi-generational space and repeat it often so everyone is on the same page.
2. Be Creative in Connection – Connecting different generations doesn't have to look the same and connecting same generations. It's unlikely that a second-grader is going to go out for coffee with a senior citizen. But what if the oldest [Sabbath] School class

showed up to cheer on the kids in tee ball in soccer? What if the teenagers worked alongside their parents in serving their community together? What if intergenerational prayer partners were connected to each other? There are a lot of ways to interact with each other in meaningful ways!

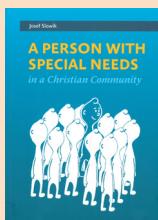
3. Give Generations a Voice – There's nothing worse than feeling like you have nothing to give or that you are not heard. If we step back and notice that our church lay leadership, committees, service groups, etc. all reflect only one or two generations and those groups are the ones casting vision, leading, and guiding the church, then there are multiple other generations that may not be feeling heard. Creating intentional space for all generations within your leadership structure can help flip that "top-down" mentality on its head and ensure that all generations have the space to give and to receive, to teach and to learn, so that all can grow together.

Since the separation of ages and the perception of differences mirrors that of our society, it's easy for us to think "that's just the way it is." But it's important to note that it wasn't that way for centuries. And equally as important to note that the impact on the church is a substantial one. Why? Because our faith is primarily passed from one generation to another.

That is generational discipleship!

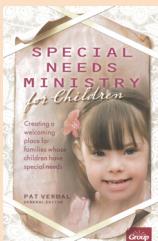
From: <https://refocusministry.org/2018/07/09/passing-it-on-generational-discipleship-in-church/>

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



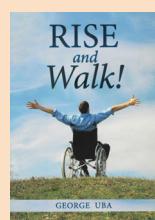
A PERSON WITH SPECIAL NEEDS in a Christian Community Josef Slowik

It is not the goal of this book to be a comprehensive source of information about people with disabilities. It does not describe every possible way of helping such people or solving situations brought about by living with a disability. It merely provides an introductory overview sufficient for everyday contact with people with physical or social disadvantages. Most of all, the book should help the reader overcome unnecessary shyness, worries, as well as many prejudices toward those with disabilities.



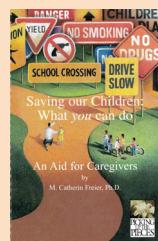
SPECIAL NEED MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN Pat Verbal, Ed.

Odds are, you have children with special needs in your community. How do you know their needs are being met? Do you know what it takes to make these kids feel welcome in your church? This practical, insightful book is your guide to answer all those questions and more. It's packed with case studies and personal stories. You'll discover why children with special needs will bless you and your church more than you can possibly imagine.



RISE AND WALK! George Uba

The life stories of the persons with disabilities are a powerful source of inspiration for all—with or without physical limitations, as there is no limit in regards with the soul. Their stories are a medicine for the depressed and disappointed hearts. A mature society will use this argument for promoting the healing through relationships and rehabilitated perceptions.



SAVING OUR CHILDREN: What you can do M. Catherine Freier, Ph.D.

Our communities no longer carry with them the responsibility and availability for others, and our youth are our most vulnerable citizens. It is of vital importance that each of us deliberately discovers and acts upon ways in which each of us can become involved in "Saving Our Children." Whether a parent, sibling, teacher, neighbor, professional, or community member, there is something "You Can Do!"



Producer: Elsa Cozzi
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